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ABSTRACT

In this examination of East Indian theories about the self, an overview of two Indian concepts of self, "atman" and "ahamkara," is presented. Then, in an effort to uncover common theoretical grounds for understanding India's diverse views of the self, comparisons are made between Western psychoanalytic theories (e.g., the theories of Freud, Erikson, and Kohut), and ancient Indian theories about selfhood. The major portion of the document focuses on the evolution of the Indian concept of self by presenting a review of early Indian literature of the Vedas and Upanisads, focusing on the career of the Cosmic Man image, Prajapati. It is suggested that Indian concerns and formulations are not simply ancient and textual and that parallels in contemporary Indian life are remarkable in their continuity with the ancient tradition. The conclusion is reached that Western ideals, and in particular classical psychoanalytic theories, of stable permanent individuality based on identifications with and respect for the unalterability of the environment are foreign to the Indian perspective; the Indian personality and world are more fluid, merging together at times. They then suggest that the two cultures provide contexts in which particular myths of the self are pursued--Western psychology has idealized a myth of autonomy, whereas Indian thought idealizes the myth of merging. (LH)

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SELFHOOD AND CONTEXT; SOME INDIAN SOLUTIONS

Alfred Collins and Prakash Desai

> "Now I am all alone--all alone," he thought. "In all India is no one so alone as I! If I die today, who shall bring the news--and to whom?"
>
> "Who is Kim--Kim--Kim?"
>
> Rudyard Kipling, Kim

Surely no culture has been more preoccupied with the experiences and concepts of a "self" than India. At least since around 1000 B.C. (during the earliest or Vedic period of Indian culture) no subject has been more central to Indian thought. Solutions to India's self-questions have been extremely diverse, ranging from the orthodox Hindu attempts to assert the absoluteness and indestructibility of an inner self (atman), which develop from the earlier idea of a world-encompassing cosmic man, to the denial of that self's reality or importance in the anatman ("no self") doctrine of Buddhism, to various sorts of immanent and transcendent selves (Yoga and theistic Vedanta) and highly social practices of life stages (in the Dharmasastras) which provide places for a special kind of self-realization. In a way,

however, a certain consensus does prevail: concepts of self in India bifurcate early on, and consistently in the classical and modern traditions two sorts of self are opposed to one another. Although there are other concepts, and wide differences of meaning for these two selves in different schools of thought, the opposition of these two is almost universal, and it may be helpful to view them under the rubrics atman and ahamkara, more or less adequately translated as "transcendent self" and "ego self." Both terms are present and developing in the Upanisads (around 700 B.C.), and have long and rich histories after this time. Atman, although always also a general term for all kinds of selves as we shall see in more detail later, comes to refer to a sense of "I-ness" supposed to be independent of, prior to, and transcendent of the flux of temporal change ("samsara") and the particulars of personality and world. It is also ultimately interior, being for instance compared to a thumb-sized man within the heart. Ahamkara, literally the "utterance of the word 'I'," became closely related to pride and an inflated sense of personal worth which was thought to result from ignorance of one's true nature. Two words often used with ahamkara suggest its narcissistic dimensions: gaurva, "swollen and heavy with a sense of self importance," and smaya, "the smile of pride of one who receives a compliment or views himself in a mirror, etc." (definitions from Hulin, 1978). Needless to say, atman is one of the most (if not the most) positively valenced of Indian philosophical

terms, while ahamkara is one of the deadliest (if not the deadliest) of "sins."

Full discussions of the early development of the two terms will be found in Renou (1951) for atman, and van Buitenen (1957) and Biardeau (1965) for ahamkara, while both words have been treated in Hulin's recent book on the Indian self. Briefly, atman (cognate with ancient Greek atmos, "breath") began as both a reflexive term ("myself," etc.) and a name for that part of a person which acts as the center for a set of otherwise discrete parts. Thus, in very early literature, atman is used to describe the breathing, pulmonary trunk of the body which unites the arms and legs. In general, it was the unity, totality or inner life principle or soul of a person, and even later, in the classical tradition, atman retains an implicit reference to the unity of the body and its psychological faculties. From a name for a person's wholeness, atman came to designate a profoundly spiritual "numinous" sense of conscious selfhood, very close to many Western definitions of the self.

Ahamkara was a word invented by the priestly authors of the Upanisads. It was used primarily to denote the sense of "I-ness" or "mine-ness" which arises in a child at a certain age, or by extension in a creator god or creative principle at a certain moment in cosmogenesis, the moment after which individuation or separation of particular entities is an

issue or fact. In different ways both atman and ahamkara named a sense of I-ness, while this became understood as positive for nonbodily and transcendent atman and negative for bodily and worldly ahamkara. There is an easy, effortless quality to many descriptions of atman, whereas ahamkara is typically filled with struggle to claim, assert or become a self. One could view much of Indian philosophy as an attempt to separate "true" (positive, atman-like) from "false" (negative, ahamkara-like) selfhood.

In this paper, we shall attempt to look more deeply into these ideas, tracing the evolution of the concepts of "self" by a review of the Early Indian literature of the Vedas and Upanisads, focusing on the career of the Cosmic Man, Prajapati. Our purpose is to bring together psychoanalytic and ancient Indian theories about the self. We will also try to show that the Indian concerns and formulations are not simply ancient or textual. The parallels in contemporary Indian life are remarkable in their continuity with the ancient tradition. We will further attempt to use psychoanalytic thought to uncover common theoretical grounds for understanding India's diverse views of the self, and will show that atman and ahamkara can be reconciled by a deeper understanding of their implicit natures and functions.

The Indian concern with selves (especially of the atman-type) is notorious in the West, and has been debated

there for the past two hundred years or more by various romantic apologists and tough-minded detractors. These include, respectively, Romain Rolland and Sigmund Freud whose correspondence on the "oceanic feeling" is well known (Freud, 1930).[1] Some of the most sensitive (and positive) Western views of the Indian sense of an atman-self have been those of literary artists--Forster, Hesse, Kipling and Eliot come to mind. Anthropologists, psychologists and psychoanalysts who have recently begun studying the personalities of actual Indians and their social relations have in general been more negative, and have not discovered a stable and definite self, individuality or ego boundaries in India. Dumont (1970), working from historical texts, locates individual selfhood only at the leel of society as an organic whole, or in the king or brahman ("priest") who are its center and source respectively, although he recognizes a second sort of individuality in the world renouncer (sannyasin). Marriott interprets Indian understandings of persons as concerning open "dividuals" (Inden and Marriott 1977) whose physical and social skins designate only moments in indefinitely ongoing, substantial liquid processes, a dynamic of particulate exchanges (called "mixing" to the extent that they are irreflexive, that is, externally related; "marking" when asymmetrical; and "unmatching" insofar as they lack affinity and are unstable or intransitive, (Marriott, 1980).

Roland (1980) identifes a "familial self" characterized

by partial mergers, as of father and son (called "idealizing self object" relationships following Kohut, 1971), but like Dumont also allows for an immanent and transcendent self apart from the familial one. Kakar (1981) from an Eriksonian perspective, identifies an unstable alternation of self-regard between grandiosity and self-devaluation as characteristic of the Indian personality. A.K. Ramanujan (1980) in a lucid essay, acknowledges a reality behind the notorious Hindu "confusion" of what Westerners distinguish as inside/outside, self/other, etc., but considers that an actual Indian cognitive style analogous to what linguists call "context sensitivity," has been misinterpreted as a psychological defect by Western observers. This linguistic metaphor asserts that what is said, thought, done or felt need not be a result of an ideally stable interior self "expressing its needs," as it were, but rather the more or less appropriate response of an Ahamkara-self to the environment of the moment. Like Dumont and Roland, Ramanujan recognizes a necessary concern with universals or entities which need not correspond to any particular contexts, but such invarian, "context-free" ideas (moksa, atman, etc.)he takes to be of clearly secondary interest and emphasis for ordinary Indian thought. This distinction between two kinds of self (contextual vs. transcendent, etc.) has been called "split-level consciousness" (Desai, 1980; Desai and Coelho, 1981). This concept indicates a frequent split between public and private selves, i.e., what one expresses outwardly (or

pretends) and what one *really* feels or believes.

Ramanujan observes a key fact about the emergence of "universals" in Indian thought. In each of the cases he cites (the explosive experience of linguistic meaning--*sphota*, the transcendent esthetic experience--*rasa*, and spiritual release--*moksa*--"the pattern is the same: a necessary sequence in time with strict rules of phase and context ending in a free state." For each of his examples, interestingly, the traditions abound with controversy about the same central dilemma: does or does not (and if so *how* does) the context-sensitive flow preceding the moment of "freedom" bring the latter about? In what way is this flow even relevant to freedom? (cf Biardeau, 1964; Masson and Patwardhan, 1969). In the Vedanta school of thought, for example, Sankara concludes that the only "context" which brings about enlightenment (realization of absolute *atman*-self) is the hearing of certain sentences from the Upanisads ("I am *brahman*, [the absolute reality]", etc.) from the spiritual preceptor or guru by a disciple with a properly prepared, receptive mind (Lacombe, 1939). Meditation, yoga, etc., cannot *create* the experience of enlightenment (*moksa*). All they can do is help to remove obstacles and peel away the sense of *ahamkara* which has been superimposed on the eternally free and unique *atman*.

Nevertheless, a "context" *is* always there, even in

Vedanta. Indeed, in practice, receiving truth from a Vedantic guru is an exceedingly contextual business. One eats with him, sits with him, is praised and insulted by him for one's subtly appropriate or inappropriate responses. At a certain moment one's mind is ripe and can receive the guru's message: then arises that profound sort of mutual appropriation of guru and disciple about which the Gita says, "I am in him and he is in me" (Bhagavad Gita, IX-29). Again in practice it is not just the repetition of the great Upanisadic sentences which occurs at these moments. Indeed, the folklore of discipleship holds that every moment of contact with the guru, however humble, is potentially a moment of enlightenment, if the disciple's mind is ready.[2] The lesson is important, and is also exemplified in Indian theories of meaning and esthetics: moments of context-free self-feeling, esthetic appreciation and linguistic meaning arise when there is a perfect matching and therefore the possibility of union or merging of inside and outside, subject and predicate, agent and context, guru and disciple. In the Ayurvedic Indian medical literature, as Zimmerman (1975) points out, "appropriateness" (satmya), the key to health, is defined as "that which is pleasing to the self." We could paraphrase both the Vedantic and Ayurvedic positions in this way--moments of appropriateness give rise to a sense of self.

Notions of the "self" in psychoanalysis and related

depth-psychological traditions have a long and still-expanding history. Freud's concept of "ego," as has been noted by LaPlance and Pontalis (1973), was never intended to designate a purely structural entity. The essential ambiguity of ego as the representative of reality, source of defence, etc., and ego as also a libidinal or narcissistic object (and hence really a self image) has been one of the greatest sources of creativity within psychoanalysis. Hartmann's (1964) attempts to clarify the concepts of ego and self were basic to the development of ego psychology, but may have separated these concepts too sharply (cf Kohut, 1968).

It is widely recognized that Freud's interest in intrapsychic processes sometimes led him to put less emphasis on the environment and its appropriateness to the person than on conflicts within the psyche. In spite of this, however, there are abundant indications of his ongoing, always-implicit concern with the self-environment relationship. This concern is quite evident in the "metapsychology" papers written around 1915. One telling example is the idea of the "purified pleasure ego" (Freud 1915). This entity was thought to include the environment as part of the (fantasied) self, insofar as that was pleasurable. In other words, the appropriate part of the environment was included within the sense of self, while the inappropriate part became the "other," along with the pain it

induced. An understanding of a part of the self as outside is implicit in this formulation. Even more significant was Freud's (1917) dictum that "the shadow of the object has fallen on the ego" which led to the idea that aspects of the ego are based on the relationship between self and object images. Perhaps the most telling instance of Freud's concern with the self's environment, and the infantile feeling of unity between self and world that sometimes lives on into adulthood "side by side" with what the modern West thinks as a more normal sense of of separateness from the world, is found in Civilization and its Discontents (Freud 1930, p. 68).

Our preliminary overview of the Indian literature on selfhood suggests that inner experiences of selfood were always correlated with a certain environmental "appropriateness," although this was consciously denied by some Indian philosophic traditions. At this moment we simply note the parallel with psychoanalysis, and suggest that some of the same perplexities are present both in Indian thought and psychoanalytic object relations theories. Perhaps the most important of these is this: Is the self located wholly within the person, or is it partly located (or felt to be located) outside, among objects? Conversely, is the world entirely outside the self, or has it somehow come to reside within? These are clearly questions to which psychoanalytic ideas concerning internalization are relevant, and these

ideas will be considered later in the discussion.

The earliest self-experience has been imaginatively reconstructed by Erikson (1981) and Kohut (1978) as something prior to any clear sense of oneself as separate and different from the "other." They suggest that a sort of self-awareness, or perhaps better a sense of selfhood, arises epigenetically in all babies fortunate enough to have responsive mothering. The experience may be marked by the selective smiling response to the mother, an ecstatic moment when the mother's and infant's mutual delight in the other's existence lays the groundwork for the narcissistic developmental line of self regard. The heart of narcissistic development seems to be in this highly emotional, "numinous" experience of "I-ness," Erikson (1968, 1981) hypothesizes that this I-ness quickly becomes associated with sources of pleasure and effectiveness (sex organs, musculature, cognitive faculties), and shortly thereafter is constrained by social considerations of shame and guilt, and becomes "ritualized" in identification with a social self acceptable to parents and society.[3]

Like Erikson, Kohut wrestled with the question of the relationship between the self as such and its specific abilities, self-images, goals, etc. In Kohut's terminology the question becomes: what is the relationship between the "whole self" and the parts which seem to comprise it, or even

between this whole self and the "nuclear self" in which self-parts are organized through more or less well-developed narcissistic configurations.[4] Kohut's most developed thoughts on this subject are contained in a lengthy letter written in 1974 and revised subsequently as part of his collected writings (1978). These "Remarks about the Formation of the Self" record Kohut's movement from the position that "self nuclei" ("body-mind fragments") coalesce into a total self to the idea (which he never abandoned) that "the developmental path of the experience of (the child's) self is separate from that followed by his experience of the single body parts and single bodily and mental functions." Again, "The child's self experience arises separately, increasing in importance as it develops next to and, more and more, above his experience of body parts and single functions....The parts, in other words, do not build up the self, they become built into it." The primary evidence for the view of developmental lines for the whole self and part selves is Kohut's observation that the environment (mother) responds to the child "with two sets of responses: one is attuned to his experience of single parts of his body...and another is attuned to his beginning experience of himself as a ...coherent and enduring organization, i.e., to him as a self." Kohut (1977) also speaks of this primal self as a "self in statu nascendi," "a virtual self," "primed," as it were, to respond to the mother's treating it as a whole self by becoming one.

There is an ambiguity of the "I-sense" or self in the theories just described. The I-sense is considered by Erikson and Kohut to be a primary fact of existence, and only secondarily identified with sources of pleasure, abilities, goals, rules of conscience, etc. And yet it apparently always arises in a moment of intimate interaction with a "context" (usually the mother and her emotional responsiveness to the young child.)

Kohut's paradigmatic situation is the "mirroring" relationship between the mother and infant, where the child's nascent selfood is conveyed to it by the "gleam in the mother's eye." The mother's attention is a necessary context for the baby's self-experience. But clearly this situation is also one where the baby rests in the mother's arms, or in bed (an extension of her body), and just after or shortly before the intimate sharing with her in nursing. Libidinal and narcissistic relatedness are inseparable, and classical psychoanalysts have properly criticized Kohut for minimizing the emotionally charged libidinal aspects of the relationship out of which the self experience arises.

But note the paralel with the Indian situation described earlier. There, too, we hypothesized that the experience of selfhood, analagous to Kohut's I-ness, arises only in a context of warm emotional relatedness. If the ultimately

private, interior sense of the I occurs only in the context of affective relationships, we have a natural paradox, one not generated by culture-specific choices, but rather which people of all cultures must face. Hence another purpose of this essay is to explore how Indians have dealt with the paradox, and compare this with several Western depth-psychological solutions, showing how this paradox can be overcome.

"I" THEORY IN THE WEST

Let us examine some recent psychoanalytic theories a little further. Erik Erikson (1981), writing of the I-experience in Jesus' Galilean sayings, lists several essential ingredients of perceiving oneself as an "I". First, and most central, is numinosity: "The I, after all, is the ground for the ... assurance that each person is a center of awareness ... a center so numinous that it amounts to a sense of being alive, and more, of being the vital condition of existence" (p. 323). A second essential feature is the I's "luminosity," its consciousness. It was this aspect of the self that William James (1890) called the "I" or "pure ego" in opposition to the "me" or objective self. Third, Erikson finds essential to the emergence of the I-sense an interplay with a maternal Other who in some sense is perceived as a primal You. From the beginning, according to Erikson, there is a sense of "binary" relatedness inherent

in the I; and the I and the You are different, though intimately joined. Erikson (1981, p. 330) makes it clear that the child contributes to the mother's I-sense as well as gaining his I-sense from her: "it seems of vital importance that this Other [the mother] and, indeed, related others, in turn experience the new being as a presence that heightens their sense of I." To translate Erikson's idea in Kohutian terms, we may say that the child is a self object for the mother as much as she is for him, and their interaction has the mutuality of a field in which both participate. A fourth necessary ingredient of I-ness is a sense of "centrality," related to which is a feeling of inner autonomy, amounting to a sense of being able to act effectively.

Much of Erikson's essay discusses how the I-sense could maintain itself in the daily life of some Jews of ancient times who were subjected to an environment that negated in one way or another almost all of its essential conditions. According to Erikson, the solutions arrived at formed the basis of the Jewish and Christian religions; in both cases, though more strongly in Judaism, the I was preserved by being lodged in a God who is the transcendent center of the life of the community and of the individual. Hence, Jehovah said to Moses, "I am that I am." Religion compensates for a threatened I by transcending the need for a supportive context, but also itself supports the I-sense of the beleving

community, becoming a new context. One of the most important ways that the Jewish God does this, Erikson suggests, is by strengthening the father-son, or "patrilineal" identification of the I-sense (by stressing the relationship of selfhood to the "fathers": Moses, etc.) and ultimately connecting it with the idea of the nation Israel as a historical entity transcending actual geographic boundaries and to some extent, cultures. This illustrates a fifth essential quality of the I: its continuity. We shall find a similar phenomenon in India, where the ahamkara-self is sometimes defined through a continuous father-son lineality stretching back through the ancestors to the gods.

In Kohut's (1977) epigenetic theory, the "spark in the mother's eye" as she looks at him awakens a virtually pre-existent self-experience in the young infant; similarly Erikson speaks of "the early feeding situaton of the human infant, including that meeting of eye to eye which, it is increasingly clear, is an important source of the sense of I and of a primal we." But for Kohut a second and equally important source of the I is an "idealizing merger" with the parent (usually the father for the boy). The child's still-shaky I-sense is included and participates in the much more glorious I-sense and personal effectiveness of the parent, thus strengthening itself. Both this idealizing sort of relationship and the mirroring relationship with the mother Kohut calls "self-object" relations. In normal

development they become partially internalized as ambitions and ideals out of which develop a relatively permanent "cohesive self," but no one ever becomes able wholly to do without a contextual contribution to his sense of X.

Explicit in Kohut's work is a model of the self that embeds it essentially (although less and less with psychological development) in its mirroring and idealized environment. It is the partial and optimal failure of this environment to meet the person's efforts to view it through the rosy spectacles of the two self-object configurations that brings about internalization, the process whereby mirroring and idealizing become aspects of inner structure, partially independent of the environment. Kohut, however, does not consider the possibility of a culturally-defined environment that <u>does</u> live up to the person's self-object informed expectations, or of a self that is more capable of altering itself to find the world an appropriate context for its selfhood. Would internalization occur in such a case? Is it possible for a culture to provide a responsive self-object context which could endure in healthy individuals for a lifetime? Conversely, could persons in that culture learn to transform their selves in order to make the environment more appropriate to them? We will suggest that India approaches such a culture.

THE INDIAN SELF IN THE VEDIC PERIOD; A CASE HISTORY

Self-feeling, so far as it can be discerned in the older Indian texts (Rig Veda primarily), was essentially an event closely connected with moments of creation, especially as manifested in the ecstacy of poetic inspiration, and in the gods' magnificent sense of effectiveness in the act of cosmogenesis: religious sacrifice and poetic thought participated in and assisted at the opening of the world. Simon and Weiner (1966) have noted a similar function of poetry in Homeric Greece; in both Greece and the Rig Veda poetic inspiration magnifies a man's sense of aliveness and agency by uniting him experientially with the cosmic environment; in neither case is any concept of self an explicit object of reflection, but we see here several of the essential qualities of selfhood identified by Erikson (1981)-- numinosity, mutuality of self and object, a search for continuity, and a powerful sense of effectiveness.

In the Purusasukta hymn which occurs late in the Rig Veda (X.90), cosmic sacrificial celebrations (exchanges between poetic man and the cosmos) were interpreted as acts of a single giant figure, a Cosmic Man (Purusa) whose body was found to contain the whole cosmos through identification of his articulated parts with those of the cosmic regions (his breath was the wind, his eye the sun, etc.). The Cosmic Man, and his human counterpart the Sacrificer (the man who

paid for the rite), were symbolically reborn from a pre-cosmic state of things, a sort of undifferentiated matrix, called brahman. The complement of his birth was, however, the Cosmic Man's death through dissection or fragmentation, and various means were sought to ward this off or deny it. These led to subsequent efforts to internalize the sacrifice within the bodily, mental or spiritual self of the human person, so that nothing remained outside to threaten the cohesiveness of this self (cf Collins, 1976).

Thus arose the Upanisadic doctrine of an homunculus-self called atman, not yet equivalent to the transcendent atman but on the way to it. This thumb-sized version of the Cosmic Man within the heart (angustha-matra-purusa) served to allay some of the fear of dissolution that was widespread at this time, but was not completely successful. For example, the quest of the Buddha was motivated by his perception of both the futility of the communal sacrifice of the Cosmic Man and the fragility and transcience of the sacrificer's body, and led to a total rejection of attachment to any kind of ahamkara or bodily self, even of the subtle kind represented by the humunculus self.

We may speculate, as a result of this disquiet, some Upanisadic thought moved towards interpeting the Cosmic Man, and even the humunculus-self, as resting on a yet more subtle and interior self, the nonbodily and indestructible,

transcendent atman. Thus the fear of death (understood as a narcissistic fear of bodily-mental self dissolution) which the earlier ritual-mythical thought had not removed, was at least temporarily and for some people overcome.

We will attempt to explore this development in more detail, using the device of treating the Cosmic Man as a case history. We will call him Prajapati, literally the "Father of Offspring" or "Lord of Creatures," although he takes on many names and personalities. Our approach will treat Prajapati as a model of the life cycle of the ancient Indian self. We will begin with his birth.

Prajapati's birth is repeatedly described in physical terms in the texts. But typically he is not born of a mother or other singular person; often he arises from the pre-cosmic Waters, an image also very common the Rig Veda.

> In the beginning this world was nothing but a sea of water. The Waters desired to be born (propagate themselves). They worked at inward brooding (tapas), became heated and produced a golden egg. The egg floated for one year, and Prajapati was born from it. That is why women, cows and mares give birth after one year. Sathpatha Brahmana XI.1.6.1-2).

Prajapati's birth usually results, as here, from a desire on his "mothers'" part to "be born". The verb for "be born" (prajayemahi) occurring in the present text (from pra-ja/jan in the optative middle voice) expresses parents' desires for

an act of "birth" in which the distinction between parent and infant is not sharply drawn, a nondistinction which permits the parents' existence to continue in the child.

A very common Vedic expression is prajabhih prajayemahi, "May we be born through progeny!" This is a prayer for the speaker's lineage to be "extended" through the birth of offspring (praja). The idea of extending a man's lineage is even more explicit in the expression tanayebhih tanute, "He extends (tan-,' to extend, hold out') himself through offspring." The idea of a selfhood uniting a man and his son is omnipresent in the Vedic literature, for example, in the expression, "You are the atman (self) called Son" addressed to the newborn male child by the father [Footnote:(Paraskara Grhya Sutra I.16.18 and Satapatha Brahmana XIV.9.4.26)]. When the father dies, he transfers his vital breaths (prana-s) into the son, and gives him the sacred knowledge of transcendent brahman, which is itself often spoken of as a man's true self[5] The waters in our story desire to have offspring; but at the same time (part of the same idea) they desire to extend or prolong themselves, or cause themselves to ripen or mature, or become widely disseminated. Prajapati is the ripened or extended state of the Waters. All of these ideas are present in the Rig Veda at the very beginning of Indian culture, and derive from a basic conception of the parent-child relationship which stresses generational continuity over separation. Simon and Weiner (1966, p. 312)

find a similar conception in Homeric Greece, where "poetry links previous generations with the present generation," thus blurring "the lines of individual identity."

The connection of the father-son unity with the world of the gods (similar to what Erikson finds in Judaism) is clear at Aitareya Aranyaka II.1.8.

> This world was water: This (water) was the root, that (world) was the shoot, this the father, those the sons. Whatever is the son's is the father's and whatever is the father's is the son's. Mahidasa Aitareya who knew this said, "I know myself as reaching to the gods, and the gods as reaching to me."

"Birth" extends the self in (the form of) a person's offspring. It causes a preceeding formless, fluid state to become more definite, in something like an act of self-ripening (expressed also by the idea of tapas, "inward brooding").

Equally fundamental to Prajapati's birth is the requirement of self unification.

> In the beginning were the seven Breaths (prana-s). They were indefinite and formless (asat). They made themselves into seven Persons, but realizing that they could not be born (propagate themselves) in this condition made the seven Persons into one Person. This Person became Prajapati. Satapatha Brahmana, VI.1.1.

This story expresses the multiplicity of Prajapati's origins,

rather like Melanie Klein's "part objects," or Kohut's early idea of multiple "self nuclei" (Kohut, 1978; also see Gedo, 1979). Implicitly, a determinate, cohesive world arises out of a preceeding state of indeterminacy or disorder. The self of Prajapati completes him "as the whole completes the parts" (Renou, 1951): it is a principle by which cohesion is constructed. In summary, the self is made firm and cohesive through its lineal descent and continuity into future generations; the movement is in both directions, as self-definition increases with time but also with recognition of the self's inherence in earlier states of being (the gods and ancestors).

While Prajapati's birth is discussed repeatedly, the theme of his infancy is given little attention. It does appear frequently enough, however, to suggest that Prajapati's status as archetypal Man extended to all stages of the human life cycle.

> When Prajapati was born from the golden egg he floated on the egg-shell for one year. At the end of the year he spoke the one and two syllable words, "Bhuh, Bhuvah, Svah," and each word became the division of the cosmos which it named (earth, atmosphere, sky). Therefore, a child speaks words of one and two syllables at one year of age. Prajapati's words also became the five seasons. Also after one year Prajapati stood up, on the three parts of the cosmos. This is why a chld stands at one year. Satapatha Brahmana, XI.1.6.1-6.

Here we have a record of two of Prajapati's "developmental

milestones," the age of speaking his first words and of standing upright. As we saw before, Prajapati's actions are taken as paradigmatic for humans.

Our record of Prajapati's life takes a jump from age one year to the time of his own parenthood; the texts are concerned almost exclusively, it would seem, with issues of reproduction and their implication for the self of parent and child. Prajapati, like the Waters, etc., "desires" to reproduce himself (the verbs are ja/jan, as before, and srj-, "to emit, release, emanate, let flow out"). Prajapati's motives are various, but one of the most important seems to be hunger. Ub ibe stirtm Orahaoatu (or Hunger personified) was hungry and made other beings in order to eat them.

> Prajapati, called Death and Hunger, creates offspring in order to eat them. Thus, he is called Aditi (a form of the Mother goddess; a play on words is present: ad means "eat"). In the beginning was only Hunger or Death. He thought, "Let me have a self." He sang and water flowed out of him. Whatever he created out of the water he desired to eat. After many preliminary creations, Death produced the Sacridicial Horse and sacrificed it to himself (i.e., he ate it). Whoever knows this avoids death, for he becomes the very self (atman) of death. Brhadaranyaka Upanisad, I.2

Most of the time, however, Prajapati does not, like an Indian Kronos, eat up his offspring. Most texts celebrate the tremendous extent of his procreativity, giving long lists of his issue. A good example is the cosmogonic story which begins Manu's Dharmasastra. Three other examples from the

Satapatha Brahmana follow:

> Prajapati emitted the Waters, which evolved into foam that became in succession clay, sand, pebbles, stones, ore and gold. Satapatha Brahmana, VI.1.3.1-6.
>
> Prajapati desired to reproduce himself and practice tapas (inward brooding, concentration). He released the waters, which flowed out of his body. Then he entered the waters in the form of an egg which evolved into the cosmos, including the earth and the plants and animals which live on it. Satapatha Brahmana VI.1.1.1-15.
>
> When Prajapati had produced living beings he looked about and from delight his semen flowed. Semen is life-sap (rasa), and as far as life-sap reaches so far extends Prajapati's self. Satapatha Brahmana, VI.2.2.6.

We see here agin the fluidity of the initial stages of self-emanation, and in the first story the progression from softer to harder materials (water, foam, clay, sand, peblles, stones, ore, gold).

A sad, but for the authors of the Brahmanas, overwhelmingly significant result of Prajapati's grandiose self-extension was his falling apart into the entities he emitted. Often these are cosmic elements (as above); equally often ritual elements or parts of the body are mentioned.

> Prajapati produced creatures, and having "run the whole race" (image of a complete cycle of existence) fell asunder. The Breath (prana) went out of him, and then vigor (tegas) departed. He fell down and food poured out of his eye. Satapatha Brahmana, VII.1.2.1.

> Having produced creatures Prajapti fell apart, and the Breath (prana) went out of him. The five bodily parts into which he fell were: hair, skin, flesh, bone and marrow. He also fell apart into the five seasons and five regions of space. Satapatha Brahmana, VI.1.2.17-19.

Prajapati's disintegration into his world is a central theme of the earlier texts, and solutions to this apparently distressing event are at the heart of those texts and also the Upanisads. Various solutions are already present in the early texts, many making use of the father-son unity to reintegrate the father by emphasizing the inherence of the father in the son, by the son's action to save the father, or more darkly, by reabsorbing the son into the father's bodily self.

> When Prajapati had fallen apart and all the food flowed out of his eye, Agni ("Fire") ate all of it up. Prajapati's Breath (prana) became the wind, and his vigor became the sun. When these were heated, all Prajapati's Breath, vigor and food came back into him. Thus, in the Sacrifice, when the Sacrificer heats the offering, puts it on a golden plate and adds kindling sticks, he puts Breath, vigor and food back into himself and reintegrates himself. Satapatha Brahmana, VII.1.1.4-10.

The personified fire god, Agni, has here become an alter ego for Prajapati--he eats up the products of his father's self-extension, thereby reintegrating them into his (which is also to say his father's) self. Prajapati is reunited through being eaten: since father and son are one and identical, there is no difference between eating and being

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eaten, and this is the point. The tactic of the son reconstructing the father leads at times to a reversal of their status. This is illustrated in the following episode where the son gives his name to the father rather than the reverse (as is usual).

> Prajapati had created everything and fell apart. He said to Agni, "Restore me." Agni replied, "What will I get for doing it?" Prajapati said, "People will call me after you, for whichever of the sons is successful in life, after him they call the father, grandfather, great-grandfather, son and grandson." Saying, "So be it," Agni restored his father. Therefore, while being Prajapati, people call him Agni. Satapatha Brahmana VI.1.1.10-13.

The idea of the son reconstituting and reintegrating the old, decrepit father by eating him ("incorporating," as we might say using a psychoanalytic term with oral connotations) is similarly inverted in the Sraddhas, or memorial offerings for the dead "fathers" (father, grandfather and great-grandfather). These offerings have the aim of reconstructing the departed ancestors' bodies (Knipe, 1977; O'Flaherty, 1980) by feeding them balls of food (pinda-s) that represent their bodies. The balls are prescribed to be eaten by Brahmans or cows who represent the "fathers," or thrown into fire or water (Kane, 1973, p. 480), evidently so that they can be returned to a fluid condition in order to be reconstituted and the fathers reborn and maintained in heaven. The underlying oneness of father and

son is clearly visible in the fertilizing effects of the pinda offerings for the son: the ceremony is repeatedly said to produce offspring for him. For example, it is explicitly stated that if the wife of the son offering the Sraddha eats a pinda while repeating the sentence, "Place an embryo (in me), O Fathers!", she will give birth to a son endowed with various auspicious qualities (Kane, 1973, p. 480). Again, it appears that the son can save the father either by eating him or feeding (i.e., being eaten by) him. In either case, both father and son benefit. As the Aitareya Aranyaka, II.5 says, "when the father supports the child before its birth and thereafter he really supports himslf," since father and son are one self.

An earlier instance where the father "eats" the son in order to reconstruct himself is the following.

> Prajapati had emitted creatures and entered them in the form of his son, Agni. Then he searched for that boy, desiring the forms which Agni had taken on. Aware of this, Agni entered even more animal forms. Prajapati found him, and again desired to "fit Agni's forms to his own self." He cut off the heads and put them on himself, thinking that the animal' essence lay in the heads, and that by putting them on himself he would prevent the Sacrifice (himself) from falling apart. But he was mistaken: the bodies, which he had not assimilated to himself, had gone into water and clay. He took these and made a brick, baked it, and took it to himself also. Then he was complete. Satapatha Brahmana, VI.2.1.

Prajapati, in effect, kills his own son in order to

reintegrate his creative energies and re-establish a cohesive self. This refusal of the father to give his body and powers to the son is a common theme, and seems to be the meaning of the famous Sunahsepa story of the Aitareya Brahmana (Gonda, 1975, 394-395). The Indian father's animus towards his son has been called the "Laius Complex" by A.K. Ramanujan (1972).

Sometimes Father Prajapati is saved from disintegration through his identity with the son who reintegrates him into his (the son's) body, or is himself reintegrated into the father's self or body. At other times, we are told that Prajapati preserves his cohesiveness by separating his own good and bad parts, and defeating or in other ways getting rid of the bad parts. The image is usually that of a struggle between the gods and demons (Asuras), both of which are sons of Prajapati. The bad side of the father is identified as the cause of Prajapati's disintegration, and by defeating or abandoning it he makes himself purely good and thereby immortal.

> Desirous of offspring, Prajapati continued his inward brooding (tapas). He put the power of reproduction into himself and made the gods from the breath ofhis mouth. They entered the sky and were his daylight. By breating downward he created the Asuras. They entered the earth and were his darkness. He knew that he had created evil (papman) since there was darkness for him then. Hence, he put the evil into the Asuras and cast them aside. Satapatha Brahmana, XI.1.6.1-10.

On attaining the earth which they had sought

> through the Sacrifice, the gods saw only darkness. They made a special offering to Nirrti, the goddess of Destruction, to dispel the darkness. Prajapati had fallen apart, and the gods placed him as seed into the fire-pan to be reborn. All his evil parts, the mucus and embryonic coverings, they removed and sent to Nirrti. Thus, Prajapati and the sacrificer tread evil and destruction underfoot. Evil is whatever is nonspecific "not (yet) a thing"into nothings," lacking quality, undifferentiated, "not (yet) a thing" into "nothings." (alaksana, asat)' thus, Prajapati makes evil and corruption (asat). The sacrificer is instructed to leave Nirrti's place without looking back, and not to touch her offering or place during the rite. Thus, he separates himself from evil and corruption, and "unbinds" his own life-force (ayus). Satapatha Brahmana, VII.2.1.
>
> During the Royal Consecration (Rajasuya) an offering is made to Nirrti to separate Prajapati's evil (papman) from him. The evil is represented by a portion of rice which is placed in an ant hill, and apparently represents the embryonic coverings which must be removed (Heesterman, 1957).

Perhaps even more important than the tactic of getting rid of evil, putting it out of sight and mind, is the pushing of Prajapati's disintegration to the limit, to the point of his "having run his course" and being "consumed and useless" (Satapatha Brahmana, VI.8.2.6.); at this moment of maximal disintegration (a predominant symbol of this ultra-chaotic--in Sanskrit, tamasika--state is ashes), Prajapati's remains are returned to his Mothers, often the Waters, to be reborn and reconstructed. For example, Prajapati's evil parts are offered to Nirrti in the Royal Consecration and placed in an ant hill, a container which often functions as a symbolic womb out of which life is

reborn. (References in Heesterman, 1957.)

> After the ashes have been removed from the fire-pan in the Agnicayana rite, they are placed in a bag and thrown into the water. As they float, a small porton is taken back and put into the fire-pan, which represents Agni's body. The text explains this procedure with a story: The gods reflected on what to do with the ashes: "If we make these ashes, such as they are, part of our own self we shall become mortal bodies, not freed from evil (papman); and if we cast it away we shall put outside of Agni what is of Agni's nature. (In other words, to assimilate the "dead" ashes would make the self mortal, while to exclude them would make it incomplete.) After considering this dilemma they decided to put the ashes into the water, "for the water is the foundation of this universe." They say, "O divine waters, receive these ashes and put them in a soft and fragrant place. Matter that is consumed has run its course and is useless." By being placed in the waters the ashes can be reborn as part of Agni's self. The waters are therefore called Agni's mothers. The ashes settle in the waters which are his womb; having united with his mother, Agni is said to shine brightly again, and to have returned home. He lies most happily in his mother's lap. Thus renewed, he is asked to come again to men with food and new life: "With wealth return, O Agni, overflow with the all-feeding stream on every side." Satapatha Brahmana, VI.8.2.1-8.

It is interesting that Prajapati's disintegration is associated with a goddess, Nirrti (whose name means Decay or Dissolution), since it is through another feminine power (the Waters, brahman, etc.) that he is reborn. But the key fact is that it is his "evil" which is reborn as nourishment. This theme can be summarized in the rubric, "papman becomes sri", "evil becomes auspiciousness." The same theme is found in contemporary South India, where the functon of transforming death into nurturant substance is a property of

women, (Reynolds, 1980).

Prajapati's career, like the seasonal nature that he impersonates, is endlessly circular, moving from formlessness or emerging from the primeval, maternal waters, to the creatures of this world who decoy into, and then again into the waters. Prajapati "extends" himself in a circle back to his original state, and is then ready to create anew. To express the matter in Marriott's (1976) terms, he moves from his cool ("unmixed"), also whole and integrated ("matched") state of being, in which he lacks specific form (is "unmarked") to a state of being manifest in many specific forms ("marked" and "mixed") but disarticulated ("unmatched); thence he travels back again to his unmarked, unmixed and matched beginnings. One may compare the similarly mobile god Visnu, who alternates along a straight path between a latent, sleeping (unmixed, matched) state during dark periods of cosmic dissolution and an active, reproductive wakefulness during times of his bright cosmic manifestation, when he mixes with and marks the world to restore it to an appropriately marked and matched state of order.

In summary, Prajapati's wholeness is restored, and his disintegration reversed by the following strategies:

1. Prajapati eats or otherwise assimilates his offspring, thus reconstituting himself by reintegrating his

dispersed substance.

2. Prajapati is eaten by his son, and participates in his son's wholeness. This strategy is nearly the same as the first, but involves a reversal of father-son status.

3. Prajapati gets rid of his bad parts, which represent his disintegration and identifies with the good or cohesive side.

4. After falling apart, Prajapati's parts are reintroduced into his mother's womb, and he is reborn whole.

One can view all of these attempts to redeem Prajapati in terms of self-environment "appropriateness," or in the language of the texts, making the world Prajapati's own. As Heesterman (1964) says, the ideal sacrificer, Prajapati's human representative, "is born into a world he has made himself." This is one significance of the doctrine of karma (that actions always have results) for the actor's selfhood: through his self-sacrificial activity of making a world of creatures from his own substance the world is made appropriate to his cohesive selfhood, rather than destructive of it.

> The initiant (Diksita) pours out his own self into the firepan, the womb. As he becomes initiated, he makes a world for himself, and when he has become fully initiated, he is born into that world.

Satapatha Brahmana, VI.2.2.27.

It is not difficult to see the issue of self-environment apprpriateness operating in each of the four strategies noted above. Prajapati's eating of his offspring and being eaten by his son Agni both united Prajapati with what he has produced out of himself. But Prajapati's offspring also constitute the environment in which he exists, the whole world. The underlying idea apparently is that man produces his world by tearing himself apart. That is, the sense of a whole self is attacked by environmental experiences which pull apart its wholeness, demanding responses from the parts only (cf Kohut, 1978). For example, the necessity to use the visual faculty to see objects in the environment must have seemed to separate vision from the whole self. Indeed, the Indian theory of perception implicit here (and explicit elsewhere) is that the world outside is created through being experienced. Perception is the process by which an "environment" is created. Thus, the faculty of sight, and the eye, precede and cause visual objects; for example, Prajapati's sight creates the sun. This means, however, that the destructive, incohesiveness-tending nature of the environment can be redeemed through the coherence of the self from which that environment emanated; thus Prajapati "eats" his offspring, or is "eaten" and given a newly cohesive birth by his mother. The strategy of identifying incohesiveness as a "bad" part of Prajapati and disposing of that

incohesiveness attempts to prevent disintegration from proceeding indefinitely.

The second strategy mentioned above, that of Prajapati participating in his son's new cohesiveness, may be slightly harder to understand in terms of self-environment appropriatness, since it is collective or successive cohesiveness. In this solution the self is projected into the environment, and continues a lineage of selves that are identified as a part also of that enviornment. Since they extend beyond the emanating person, such new selves are sometimes thought to be assumed only after death. Generational continuity affords a protection against disintegration; one's progeny are one's self-objects, extending the "self" beyond one's own mortal body. The part of the environment which most naturally lends itself to this projection in India is the son, although the implications of locating the father's self in the son were a source of some ambivalence for the Vedic thinkers: the son's life, once separated from the father's life, seemed to weaken the father's.[6]

THE SELF IN THE UPANISADS

After the Brahmanas, when thought had been focussed on redeeming Prajapati from his periods of disintegration, the Upanisads discovered another approach to the problem of

achieving a cohesive self. Rather than stressing substantial organization and articulation as the nature of selfhood, the Upanisads focus on an identification of the I with the inner unmanifest, subtle, liquid source of Prajapati's self organization. This can be understood as a development of the fourth strategy discussed above, that of returning Prajapati to his mother's womb. Atman becomes the inner, orginating life-sap (rasa) of things rather than the structures evolved outof that liquid. The central insight seems to have been this: if one's self is the source of everything, decay and incoherence cease to be fearful, since as the Brhadaranyaka Upanisad has it, "one becomes the self of death."

> In the beginning this world was only the self (atman) in the shape of a person (purusa). Looking around, he saw nothing other than himself. He said first, "I am;" thus arose the name "I". Therefore, even now when addressed one first says, "This is I," and then gives his other name. Because he is a person (purusa) existing before all other things, he burns evil. One who knows this burns up any who wants to be "before" him. He became afraid because he was alone, but realized that he need not fear, since "fear comes from a second." He has no delight because he was alone, and made himself into the shape of a man and woman embracing. Thus, as the sage Yajnavalkya used to say, this body is only half of oneself, like half of a split pea. The wife fills the space of the other half. Brhadaranyaka Upanisad, I.4.1-3.

The I-experience here is the source of everything else, and because it is the source it can destroy ("burn up") anything in the environment which tries to oppose it. Even so, reality intrudes in the form of fear--apparently a fear akin

to loneliness, or a fear of being unresponded to. The atman's decision to make itself into an embracing couple seems to be a solution to this problem, after an initial attempt at denial ("Fear arises only from a second.").

The aim is to become identified with (to "know") a self beyond the various parts and aspects of the person (body parts, perceptual faculties, etc.). This self is sometimes understood as their principle of cohesiveness. Thus, he is the one who "connects" and "disconnects" (uh- and nir-uh-) the parts of the person (Brhadaranyaka Upanisad, III.9.26). The atman-self appears as the "Breath" (prana) which connects the parts in a cohesive whole.

> Prajapati created (manifested out of himself) the faculties of action. Each went about practicing its own specific task (Speech spoke, etc.). Death entered them, but could not enter Breath which was in the middle. The other faculties took refuge in Breath and became "forms" of it, thus eluding Death. Brhadaranyaka Upanisad, I.5.21.

Besides identifying the self with the source and principle of unity, the Upanisads often connect it with the essence of the world, or the aim of desire. Instead of seeking objects because one wants them, or needs to idealize or be mirrored by them, one seeks them only because they are a part or aspect of the "self," which is alone truly desirable. The "self" side of the self-object seems to have become dominant, and to have totally assimilated the "object"

side.

> The sage Yajnavalkya said to his wife Maitreyi, "Not for the sake of the husband is the husband dear (to the wife); he is dear for the sake of the self." Similarly for all other things humans hold dear. By knowing the self, one knows everything.

In the end, then, a position of absolute monism is reached, where there is no other. No more is the husband "dear" only <u>because of</u> the self; he like everything, "has <u>become</u> the self." (<u>Brhadaranyaka Upanisad</u>, II.4.14)

DISCUSSION OF THE PRAJAPATI/ATMAN MATERIAL

The Cosmic man image in the Vedic Purusa and Prajapati represents an attempt to bring about a unit of man and world in fantasy. It is a grandiose fantasy which alternates with moments of disillusion and despair. The later Upanishadic <u>atman</u> doctrine just discussed seems in a way even more grandiose, since selfhood, in this theory, is freed from all the vicissitudes of life in the human and cosmic worlds and offers a kind of conceptual solution to the eternal cycle of grandiosity and despair, by transcending both phases of the cycle.

It seems clear that one motive for the grandiosity of

the cosmic Man image was the need to preserve a sense of self cohesiveness and continuity in the face of the threat of fragmentation. These Kohutian ideas are expressed quite literally in the language of the Brahmanas, where the whole point of the sacrifice was to bring about cohesiveness for the sacrificer, a state of fused unity which could withstand all environmental shocks, including death. When, inevitably, the sense of self shifted from secure (if defensive) cohesion to the generativity of fatherhood and incipient fragmentation, tactics had to be devised to overcome the threat. The primary way this was accomplished, as recorded in the Upanisads, and to some extent earlier, involved a regression in fantasy to the mother, or more exactly to the stage of empathic merger with her, so that the fragmented self ("ashes") could be renewed and reborn whole. Gradually, the parent half of this primitive union became also identified with the self and was referred to as the "immortal" part of Prajapati, or his "unimanifested" part. This maternal source of the self was reinterpreted in a concept of the self as source. The historical antecedent of this move is the "three-fourths" of the Cosmic Man which is immortal life in heaven" in the Purusasukta of the Rig Veda (X.90). It is as if one part of the self gave birth to the other part. The self became the origin of everything in an absolute denial of dependency on anything, including its own source. Like Kipling's Kim when he finds himself alone, the atman is afraid because he has no second; although he talks

himself out of it, it is clear that aloneness makes him afraid of falling apart, of losing his sense of self.

The situation has the appearance of Kohut's "vertical split," a defensive stance of denying need for a genuine other through unconscious merger with the parent image. (See the diagram in Kohut, 1977, p. 213.) The person characterized by a vertical split is often overtly grandiose, isolated and self-sufficient. For Kohut there is an underlying mother image which confirms his sense of superiority provided that the person does not try to become independent of it. In the Vedic material the Waters are like the mother who mirrors, while father Prajapati or the Sacrificer resembles the continually emitting narcissistic self. On the other side of the vertical split, according to Kohut, is a sense of being empty and ineffective, depressed and isolated, i.e., cut off from the affirming maternal mirror. The person presumes to a merger on one side of the split which he "really" knows (on the other side) to be disastrously absent. Prajapati's state of chaotic disarray after creation, when he becomes disarticulated and "emptied out," resembles the depressed, empty side of Kohut's vertical split; in Prajapati's life it periodically alternates with the state of inflated greatness and completion.

When the Upanisads interiorized the source of goods in the absolute <u>atman</u> which put an end to alternation, there

must have been a sense of tremendous psychic victory. It would have seemed as if nothing was needed from outside, and the danger of falling periodically away from the state of inner fullness was obviated for one and all. "I-ness" could be experienced free from the constant need for repair and renewal. As the Hindu philosopher Sankara is supposed to have said a thousand years later, "Behold I! Obeisance to Me who need nothing."

CONCLUSION

The Indian vision of personality is one that finds the self embedded essentially in a world of self-objects, towards which it turns constantly and eagerly, but which it introjects or incorporates when necessary to preserve a threatened sense of self-world mutuality. At times in Indian thought much of what modern Western psychology thinks of as the "inner" personality structure is conceived as outside the self, while at other times more or less of the "outer" world is understood as within the self. "Inside" and "outside" are defined in terms of appropriateness, not physical ("real") location. That which is more alike, homogeneous or fitting is treated as nearer while that which is less homogeneous and fitting and more unlike is seen as farther out. Meissner's understanding of introjects as "inner" structures which are felt as partially outside is parallel to the Indian view, as is his treatment of projections that are in a way felt to be within. When this process of self-world adjustment fails, the move towards an objectless inner <u>atman</u> may occur, at a philosophical level, and various forms of split-level consciousness at an experiential level.

Western, and in particular classical psychoanalytic ideals of stable, permanent individuality based on identifications with and respect for the unalterability of the environment are foreign to the Indian perspective. The

Indian personality and world are more fluid, blending together at times, while at other times (or even at the same time) an interior core of the self is held aloof with practiced detachment. We are tempted to say that the two cultures provide contexts in which particular myths of the self are pursued. Western psychology has idealized a myth of autonomy, whereas Indian thought idealizes the myth of merger. While the atman ideal seems to contradict this, offering an image of absolute isolation and renunciation of the world, we have seen that the atman, too, can only be understood in the context of the ahamkara-self and its various sorts of appropriateness and cohesiveness; in particular in its failures to maintain these.

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Footnotes

1. As Hanly and Masson (1976) point out, the expression and concept derive from the Indian mystic Sri Ramakrishna, about whom Rolland wrote extensively.

2. Personal observation: Collins, 1968-71.

3. As Carl Rogers (1961) similarly writes, one's self-feeling becomes constrained by "conditions of worth" laid down by others, and one may get locked into an unconsciously accepted role at variance with one's "real self." Optimally, the I-ness will become stably identified with a fairly broad sense of family and occupational identity, and will be flexible enough to include other aspects of I-feeling when required by a changing environment of the developmental process.

4. These include "idealizing self-object relationships, "where the child's sense of self participates in the idealized image of the parent, and which develop into internal ideals, and mirroring self-object relations," where the child's sense of self is magnified and reflected back to itself by the parent; these become ambitions (Kohut, 1971).

5. Brhadaranyaka Upanisad I.5.17.

6. Freud's 1914 discussion of narcissism is relevant here.